

Volume 1, Issue 2

7 January 2006



4TH SUPPORT BATTALION, 1ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

HAMBONE EXPRESS

Battalion Commander's Corner Taking Taji by Storm!

Soldiers, family members, and friends of the Packhorse Battalion, Packhorse Battalion has taken Taji by storm. Over the past week, the last of the battalion's personnel safely arrived in Iraq and the battalion engaged in transition with the 125th Forward Support Battalion, from Ft. Riley, Kansas. Every Soldier is becoming familiar with their new environment and mission ahead. I ask each and every Soldier to maintain themselves, maintain their equipment (weapons, sensitive items, and vehicles), and focus on the mission at hand. You are doing great. The Packhorse Soldiers are on track to fully take on the mission 13 Jan 2006. Soldiers in the battalion impress me everyday through their professionalism, dedication to the mission, and positive attitude! Know that you are standing out in the Taji crowd. Folks know who you are by the way that you present yourselves and your "Packhorse Pride". Thanks for all that you do! A few days from now our mission begins in earnest. Accept all challenges head on, never accept unacceptable risk, and most important, operate safely. We will have many long days ahead-know that by working together we

will complete our mission and return home to our families.

As I close, I want to say thanks to all of our families. I appreciate everything that you do in support of your service member. We cannot do what we do without you. Thank you!

- Packhorse 6 -



Command Sergeant Major's Corner

Well we have finally made it to our final destination and are preparing to assume our new mission. Everyone made it safe and has been doing great things in preparation for our transition here in Iraq. I've been out observing the transition of our soldiers with the outgoing soldiers and I'm proud of the professionalism and positive attitude that our soldiers have displayed thus far. We have been singled out by the BDE Commander for our discipline and range operation, which shows that we are a motivated and well disciplined organization. We have a big mission ahead of us, but I know we are up to the task. We are all settled in our living quarters and are now getting settled into our battle rhythm. The mail service seems to be working well, I have no first hand knowledge since I haven't received any yet ;), but I've seen a lot of soldiers carrying around packages. I ask the families back home to keep it up because the soldiers always have a big smile on their face

when they receive mail. I'm proud of all the soldiers in 4SB and I want to thank all the families back home for all their support.

Packhorse 7 out!



HEATSEEKERS



The Heat Seekers began the New Year on the right foot. Three of our many outstanding soldiers received well deserved promotions: SPC Andrew Walden, SGT Deshawn Johnson, and SSG Scott Donovan.

Next we have SGT Johnson, who is a tank mechanic (63A). He is currently assigned to the BN S1 section. SGT Johnson has been responsible for tracking and managing the company's as well as the battalion's leaves and passes for the last year. Now while deployed to Iraq, his scope will increase considerably. He will not only track leaves and passes, he will assist in a myriad of personnel reports ranging from the BN PERSTAT to USR.

Finally, we have SSG Donovan

SSG Donovan has been assigned to the Heat Seekers for about two months now from D 7-10 Cav. His arrival to the battalion fills a critical position especially during deployment operations.

We look forward to working alongside the newly promoted Soldiers for the next year.

HEATSEEKER -6 AND 7 CPT BANKS/ 1SG DICKENS





Preparing for War

There is a big difference between garrison training and the actually training we are currently doing now. They are both equally important and we learned a lot from both. In garrison we had field training exercises, convoy live fires, and many ranges to prepare us for the training we are doing now. Our training in Kuwait and here was our last chance to grasp and refresh all those training skills we learned in garrison.

On our first day upon arrival we were trained on spotting IEDs and what do when we encountered one. It was more realistic than any training before. We were shown videos of when IEDs have gone off and the damage they can really do. Now they are going off. We have been prepared to set our minds on the possibilities that we will be faced with IEDs while on convoys outside of our FOB. We learned about the five basic components of an IED and also about evidence handling procedures. Most importantly, we were taught the various ways in which we can identify an IED; from a small battery to a dead animal on the road. We were also trained through the steps of calling in a 9 Line IED Report.

We train day in and day out. We have gone from being familiar with our M16A2 to being quite elaborate with it. We know from what the maximum effective range is to what the firing suppressor flash is for. The training we received was great because it was based on hands-on training. We were taught to clear weapons and perform a functions check without any flaws. That was great. Our 1SG took it upon himself to personally verify that each and every one of his Soldiers zeroed their weapon and that we knew exactly how to use it. We were tested on various areas of our M16A2s as well.

Also, we were trained on tactics on apprehending insurgents when they pretend to be dead. We learned different maneuvers on how to approach insurgents without violating the ROE. We were taught the Rules of Engagement (ROE) and to put in practice those rules when we are put in a difficult situation. We also reviewed our general orders until we were confident and knew them by heart.

Our 1SG is Infantry trained so he was preparing us for any situation that might arise during this deployment. He has trained us in different scenarios as to where the enemy might use our emotions and sympathy against us. His put us in situation where we would have to defend ourselves from a 10 year-old holding a weapon towards us. He's taught us ways to act instantly. For example, he explained to us that it would be easier if we try to keep that certain individual at a distance, making it easier to take action of the situation.

The Sergeants and the 1SG have trained us to the point that if we were in a situation where we have to pick up another weapon to save our lives we would be able to. Aside from knowing our M16A2 very well, we can pick up an M203 or even an M249 and know the basic components of it and know how to fire it. Our chain of command has prepared us enough to where we feel confident in Iraq.



-SPC LOPEZ





A Touch Of A Soldier's Thoughts

From the last time I came here for the last deployment to Iraq, it has a gotten a lot better. From what we started off with at the beginning to what we have now is quite amazing. Iraq is a nice country and it is coming along fine. I am also impressed at how well this country is coming along with the American people. I do appreciate them letting us use the country as a deployment area while in Iraq. It's too bad we don't really get a chance to see the country more. We are here to work not to vacation so I understand it.

Camp Taji is a great camp. It has a great dinning facility as well as a huge gym with every type of equipment you can need. The camp has implemented the comforts of home here like Burger King, Pizza Hut, Subway, Popeye's, and so forth. With all that and the MVR's, this camp has almost everything to keep soldiers morale at one hundred percent. But for the amount of personnel that comes in and out they should have more facilities, as well as plumbing. Oh to have toilets. Another thing is that everything is so spaced out. Yes you can walk to everything but it's certainly better to take the bus. With the number of Soldiers and units that comes in and out of the camp I would think that this camp would be bigger. With the number of units, illness is an issue as well. Almost everyone has or has had the Kuwaiti Krud. With the fine medical units we have, these illnesses aren't lasting long. The rules here are a bit rough and hard to deal with but it is necessary to help us keep our mind focused on the task on hand. It is not like in the rear (back home), we are in a combat situation and fooling around will only hinder us from completing the task that is given to us, even though some of the rules are somewhat extreme. Overall, this camp is a great place to station oneself during our deployment to Iraq.

My feelings about coming here to Iraq is not all that different this time from the last time I came. I am eager to do what is needed so I can go home to my family. I'm not really as scared as I was last time just more cautious. Stay alert, stay alive is one of the many sayings we have to help us focus. With the training that we have been receiving, even though painful to sit through, it is necessary and will help us in Iraq. For my unit, our moral is high. My unit has participated in many ranges, which has increased combat readiness and increased the confidences with the Soldier weapon and crew served weapons. With combat readiness, we are slowly getting there with all the things that I have already talked about. What I personally think is that we should have trained on it back in the rear than training now. I hope that the other units heed my words and do the same, so when they come here into Iraq, they would already be above the power curve. With Soldier's teams and our cohesion at its all time high, we have a great chance on helping the Iraqis learn what they need to learn so we can get up out of here as we do our jobs. Because honestly I think we don't need to be here much longer.

Well, after saying all this, I would have to say that I think we will do what is needed and make our country proud. As long as we do the right things, follow the army values, and be aware of all situations we will be just fine. And always remember to never do anything that will disgrace the Army, your unit, your section/squad, and your family name.

SPC Gillenwater, Anthony



It's already been a month...

A month ago we left all of our families and friends to come to Iraq in effort to help with Operation Iraqi Freedom. For most of us this is our first time here, but for some this is their second and third rotation.

We landed in Kuwait tired, and for some of us a little nervous. Nobody knew what to expect but everybody knew it wasn't going to be easy.

During our time in Kuwait we filled our days and our minds with continuous training. On Christmas day we came together for Entry Control Point training. Then, on Christmas night EVAC platoon sang Christmas Carols all the way to the chow hall and had dinner as a platoon. We even had our aunt (1LT. Kinder), our cousin (SPC Keene) and our brother-in-law (SPC Wollan) join us from different platoons. I even said grace!

Even though we learned a lot about what to expect while we were in Kuwait, our days were mostly long and boring. We were excited about finally getting to Iraq and getting settled in. Its not fun living out of a duffel bag.

Iraq is an interesting place. Now we have flushing toilets and jobs to do. It's hard to learn our way around but we're doing pretty well. I look forward to an exciting and extremely busy year. And to get very annoyed with all of my buddies.

By: PFC Mullins (also SPC Johnson and PFC Boesch helped)



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

GOD SQUAD'S CORNER

"Sir, are we there yet? Yes Chaplain, we're here."

Well packhorse support and everyone back home, our boots are on the ground, we're getting acclimated to the area by getting sick, soldiers are in the process of getting settled in, the commanders are full steam ahead, people are meeting with their counterparts gearing up to take over the area, some are getting rest and others are not, and so the list goes on. Busy, Busy, Busy, is the 4th Support Battalion of the First Brigade Combat Team, Fourth Infantry Division (Mechanized).

"Where is SSG Buff? He is at the BIFF? Where's that? Down the street and make a left? Where is SFC Do? He is with PSD on a mission to Mars to escort PVT Snuffy for guard duty? Where is CPT Handleit? I don't know, the last time I saw him he went to go take care of something at brigade. Where is PFC Ididit? I don't know but he just finished with cleaning the battalion headquarters. How about LT Caughtit, where is he at? Oh, he is attached to another unit for the MITT team. Where is the Colonel?" The question is not where he is, but where is he not.

Needless to say, I'm fortunate to be with this organization and all we bring to the fight. Things are very hectic yet everyone is doing their part to get online with all that needs to be taken care of before our counterparts leave. I believe with all my heart God has truly blessed us with his protection and provisions over our battalion. We have not sustained any injuries or detrimental obstacles and for the most part our people are healthy and ready to do their job. Keep up the good work Packhorse Support. And to our families, thank you for your love and support.

-CHAPLAIN (CPT) RENDON



DECEMBER EVENTS!

The following Soldiers and NCOs from the "Mighty Packhorse Battalion" have recently reconfirmed their commitment to the United States Army and the 4th Support Battalion. When you see these outstanding "Packhorse Soldiers", take the time to shake their hands and thank them for their decisions!

ALPHA COMPANY

SGT JAUREGUI
SSG CANTU

BRAVO COMPANY

SPC MORA
SPC HOWELL

CHARLIE COMPANY

SGT ALSUP
SGT HAGY

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

SRB Caps are increased by \$7,500 effective 1 Jan 06.
See MILPER Message Number 06-0007.

STAY ARMY!



BIRTHDAYS!

SPC ANGUIANO

1LT ARGO

SGT ASIATICO

SPC BOUASSEL

PFC BROOKS

SSG CAVINESS

PV2 CLARK

SSG DEMPSEY

SGT DOCKHAM

PFC GALINDO

SPC GARDINER

MAJ GORDON

CPT HINDMAN

1LT MATHIS

CW3 NERO

PFC ORMEROD

SPC SANNICOLAS

SPC SANTIAGO

PV2 SCHWAB

CPL SHAMEL

PV2 SCHWAB

CPL SHAMEL

PV2 SPENCE

SPC TURVIN

PFC VERDUZCO

SPC WALDEN



To Our Soldiers

To: ALL

From: Eileen in MA

THANK YOU! I pray for you every day! I hope you realize how many of us think of you every day, and how much what you are doing means to us! PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN!

To: All of the men and women

From: Amy Anglin-Cox in Arizona

Thank you a million times from the bottom of my heart for all you are doing. You are all GREATLY missed. My husband and I have lost a few great soldiers from b btry 6/27 ft sill oklahoma. I pray for you all to come home safe and hopefully very soon!!!!!! Thank you AGAIN Amy

To: Our Serviceman & Women in Iraq

From: Rosalie & Al Maglio in Florida

My Husband & I send our prayers to all of you for a Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year. We can never thank you enough, for all you do, so that we can enjoy the freedoms of a Democracy. God bless you all, and here's hoping you will all be coming home in the near future. You are not forgotten in the hearts of all good Americans. Keep up the good work and God speed

To: ALL OUR SOLDIERS

From: Sonya DeGraffenried in Saginaw, Michigan

I PRAY that GOD will bless and protect each one of you this holiday and everyday from now on. With much gratitude and love. GOD bless your families and your safe return. WE LOVE YOU ALL.

To: all the brave women and men

From: nadine frias in california

i wanted to thank all the brave women and men who are out serving our country. i pray that you all make it safe home for the holidays

To: SGT. CABAHUG, E.

From: Mom and Dad in New York

We are so proud of YOU, and YOUR COMRADES, taking courage to serve our country. Remember, you are always in our thoughts and prayers. May this be over soon successfully so you will be close to home. MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU AL AND THE NEW YEAR BRINGS BLESSINGS OF PEACE AND HOPE FOR ALL. With Love from NYC

To: All my brothers and sisters

From: Ryan in Florida

Thank you for your sacrifices. I know how it feels to spend christmas and birthdays away from home. You may not fully appreciate what you have done until you realize that every one back here does good luck and go army. Hooaahh!



PICTURES!



ACO SENDS SOME LAST MINUTE ROUNDS
DOWNRANGE JUST PRIOR TO HEADING
NORTH TO IRAQ!



1LT THOMAS CONGRATULATES SSG FRIEND
AFTER HER RECENT REENLISTMENT IN
KUWAIT



BCO's PV2 BAUMGARTNER WONDERS IF
THE 1SG WILL LET HER KEEP HER NEW
FRIEND.



SGT CHILDS OF HHC TAKES A MOMENT TO
CATCH-UP ON SOME NEWS FROM HOME
AND THE STATES.